

PHS grad thriving as county judge

JEANINE STEWART ; OF THE GATEWAY

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Laura Inveen has risen through the ranks of multiple legal entities, from private practice to public service, and it has paid off.

In 1992, the Peninsula High School graduate was appointed by the governor as a King County Superior Court Judge. The position comes up for election every four years, and Inveen has run unopposed every time since.

“I don’t think she’s had much opposition, because I don’t think anyone wants to run against her,” said Richard McDermott, presiding judge for King County Superior Court.

In addition to her day job as chief judge of the civil department, Inveen is president-elect of the state Superior Court Judges’ Association, which advises the Legislature on court matters.

And she loves her work.

“I really always have been really happy with the path that I’ve taken and continue to take,” Inveen said.

Inveen wanted to be a lawyer since she was in high school. Her interest in social change and social justice was so strong that she was named senior class radical, she said.

Ironically, she also was named as a finalist in the Betty Crocker future homemaker of tomorrow contest, which was based on a standardized test.

“I joke about it to this day,” Inveen said.

Along the way, Inveen said her view of how to promote justice has changed from her days at PHS, where she graduated in 1972.

“Maybe we’re a bit idealistic in our youth,” Inveen said. “Hopefully we become a bit more realistic. Oftentimes, those idealistic paths don’t pay the bills.”

After college, Inveen started her career as staff attorney for the Eastside Public Defenders Association, representing indigent clients who had been charged with misdemeanors or felonies.

But after three years there, Inveen’s interest in civil litigation prompted her to seek a new job. Her first client as an

attorney for Ogden, Ogden, Murphy and Wallace was a company that made asbestos, a material that's known for causing significant health problems.

"That wouldn't have been my first choice of clients," Inveen said. "I did it to get experience in civil litigation, and it wasn't something that I would have chosen."

The advantage was that it gave her experience working with cities and towns, which led to a job as town attorney for the City of Clyde Hill. The hours were shorter, and that allowed her to volunteer as a pro tem judge and eventually become district court judge in King County.

Inveen's heart for social justice has not left her. She has a list on her resume titled "Juvenile justice," which represents work that spans eight years and 20 different activities. She implemented a juvenile drug court, was part of several efforts to fight truancy in schools and served on the Advisory Committee for the National Center for Mental Health and Juvenile Justice.

Perhaps it's Inveen's penchant for exploration that made her so successful.

"Some of it is a personality trait from family," she said. "My mom was always doing something new and different."

But McDermott emphasized her intelligence.

"She's a very bright lady," he said. "She's known for her hard work and her diligence. I think she's respected statewide as being a leader among the judges."

Read more: <http://www.thenewstribune.com/2011/04/27/1642599/alumni-of-distinction-phs-grad.html#ixzz1KqZBB44P>

Top Photo



Photo courtesy of Laura Inveen

Laura Inveen, a Peninsula High School graduate, takes a moment Saturday along the shoreline of her family's Gig Harbor home. Inveen was appointed to the bench in King County as a Superior Court judge in 1992.

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ALUMNI OF DISTINCTION: This is the first in a two-week series of profiles about the Alumni of Distinction Class of 2011. The alumni will be honored along with 34 Students of Distinction during a community banquet at 6:30 p.m. on Wednesday, May 11, at Chapel Hill Presbyterian Church in Gig Harbor. Tickets, \$18 for adults and \$10 for students, can be purchased until May 4 at The Peninsula Gateway, 3555 Erickson St. in Gig Harbor, or by calling 253-851-9921.

APRIL 27: Jan Coen, FISH Food Bank | Laura Inveen, King County judge

MAY 4: Thomas Traaen, rear admiral of U.S. Navy | Paul Skansi, former NFL wide receiver

STUDENTS OF DISTINCTION: The first eight of our nine-part series of Students of Distinction profiles.